Thomas James Wise Collection, 1894-1932: Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number: C1298
Repository: Princeton University. Library. Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections
Manuscripts Division
One Washington Road Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA
Size: 0.2 linear feet
1 half-size archival box
Language(s) of Material: English
Abstract: Consists of selected correspondence of Thomas James Wise, the English bibliographer and noted forger of the early 20th century
Location: This collection is stored onsite at Firestone Library.
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Biography/History

Thomas James Wise was an English bibliographer and book collector who also privately printed nearly 300 works of English authors, some of which were later exposed as forgeries.

Description

The collection consists of selected correspondence of Thomas James Wise, the English bibliographer and noted forger of the early 20th century. The bulk of the correspondence consists of 29 letters of Wise sent to R. W. Chapman at Clarendon Press at Oxford, dating between 1923 and 1932. The letters primarily discuss the publishing of several of Wise's catalogues and bibliographies including a Catalogue of Printed Books, Manuscripts and Autograph Letters for the Ashley Library, A Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse of Algernon Charles Swinburne, and A Swinburne Library. Of particular interest is Wise's recurrent mentioning of his acquisition of certain pamphlets and "older" or "variant editions" of authors' works which he offers to Chapman and others for examination. In several letters, Wise makes reference to the book collector George Charles Williamson, who became one of the biggest collectors of the Wise-Forman forgeries. Williamson had urged Chapman to write the introduction to Wise's Catalogue. Wise also occasionally mentions his forgery partner, H. Buxton Forman.

Other correspondence includes a letter to Edmund Gosse with suggestions regarding an introduction to a bibliography, with Gosse's autograph response on the verso, and a letter from Gosse, dated Dec. 22, 1913, about a 'revise' of "Gold Horns." Wise received letters from scholars asking about his work, and included here is a letter of thanks to a Mr. Alwin J. Schener, telling him that he is preparing a catalogue on Dryden, which is to be followed by another on Pope. In addition, there are two letters to William Michael Rossetti, one of which is about the Thackeray Society of which Wise was the secretary.

Access and Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the Associate University Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections. The library has no information on the status of literary rights in the collection and researchers are responsible for determining any questions of copyright.

Acquisition and Appraisal

Custodial History
The collection was formed as a result of a Departmental practice of combining into one collection material of various accessions relating to a particular person, family, or subject.

Provenance and Acquisition

29 letters to Chapman were purchased in October 1944.

Edmund Gosse letters were purchased in December 1944.

Letters to Rossetti were purchased on September 25, 1970.

Letter to Alwin Schener was a gift from William H. Morris, Princeton Class of 1932, on May 29, 1987. Various AM.

Related Materials

Related Archival Material

Also available at Princeton University Library is the Forman Family Collection (C1058)

Processing and Other Information

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Thomas James Wise Collection, Box and Folder Number; Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Encoding

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2012-06-22T15:48-0400

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

Subject Headings

- Chapman, R. W.
- Forman, H. Buxton (Harry Buxton), 1842-1917 -- Forgeries.
- Gosse, Edmund, 1849-1928 -- Correspondence.
- Rossetti, William Michael, 1829-1919 -- Correspondence.
- Williamson, George Charles, 1858-1942 -- Books and reading.
- Forgers -- England -- 20th century -- Correspondence.
- Forgery -- Great Britain -- History -- Sources.
- Literary forgeries and mystifications -- 20th century.
· Correspondence -- 19th century.
· Correspondence -- 20th century.
· British literature
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<td>Acquisition and Appraisal: AM12781</td>
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<td>Letter to Edmund Gosse concerning rewording introduction to a bibliography, undated</td>
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<td>2 Letters to William Michael Rossetti, 1894 August</td>
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<td>Letter to Alvin Schener concerning Dryden and Pope catalogue, 1929 November 28</td>
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<td>Letter from Edmund Gosse to Thomas James Wise asking to see a 'revise' of &quot;Gold Horns&quot;, 1913 December 22</td>
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